新連載第2回　揺らく惑わす香る46p

ラストノーツ

Une femme sans parfum
une femme sans [illegible]

桜小路かのこ

Sakuraokoji Kanoko

東京下町のちょいと片隅。

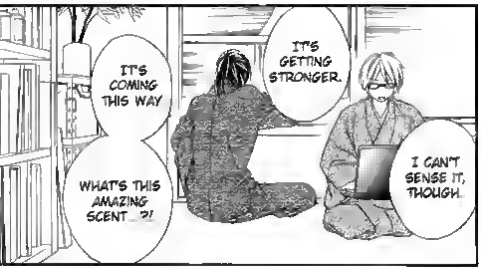
ちょいと古びたこのお店、仁藤香堂分店には
ワケあり客が今日も1人、2人、3人と。

ちょいとどころか
かなりイケてる店主の2人を
今日もねて来たこのコは――

前回のハイライト

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?
WHAT IS IT, YOUNG LADY?
AH, ARE YOU PERHAPS NOT FROM JAPAN...?
ON PATROL
SHOCK
LOOKING AROUND
LOOKING AROUND
Lim...It's this way.
HARU-CHAN, AKI-CHAN
Like this?
Haru(=spring)
Aki(=fall)
AAH, HARU-CHAN'S AND AKI-CHAN'S INCENSE STICK SHOP.
NITOU-KOUDOU BRANCH STORE?
SHE STINKS, SOME-HOW
WHER[illegible]?
AH..
ERM..
HERE..

WHAT WAS WITH THAT GIRL?
Those clothes...
WHO KNOWS
SHE SPOKE JAPANESE, BUT I DON'T THINK SHE'S FROM JAPAN.


IT'S COMING THIS WAY
IT'S GETTING STRONGER.
WHAT'S THIS AMAZING SCENT...?!
I CAN'T SENSE IT, THOUGH.

HEY, AKI...
I'LL GO TAKE A LOOK.
YOUR NOSE IS REALLY SENSITIVE.

HUH?
SOME-THING SMELLS NICE

...
THEY GUIDED ME HERE, BUT...
THERE'S NO SIGN-BOARD...
SHALL I TRY TO ENTER?
OPEN
ガラッ
BUMP
WAH!

AH,
SORRY
LIGHTLY

E-
EXCUSE ME...

IT WAS YOU...!
sniff
sniff
sniff
sniff
sniff
sniff
EH?
EH...
AS I THOUGHT!

HARU!
SEE?
IT WAS THE SCENT OF THIS GIRL
I HAD A SNIFF!
SHE SMELLS NICE...
SLAP
OUCH!
YOU'RE SEXUALLY HARASSING THIS GIRL IN BROAD DAY-LIGHT!
ARE YOU A DOG, AKI?
IT HURTS... WHAT.
GET INSI-DE!
I'M REALLY SORRY I DIDN'T TRAIN HIM WELL
SMILE
AH.
UM,
IS THIS NI-TOUKOUDOU BRANCH STORE?
THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR SHOP?
MEN...
Mistaken
Please enter

JII-CHAN TOLD ME TO BRING THIS HERE.
BRINGS OUT
THIS
JII-CHAN?
MY JII-CHAN IS GOSHIMA TEIZOU.
WHAT HAPPENED TO JII-SAN?
WHAT'S WRONG?
OH, GOSHIMA'S!
HE DIED.
I'M HIS GRANDDAUGHTER, EMIRU

BECAUSE OF WORK, HE WENT TO VIETNAM
...HUH?
UM..
I JUST GOT BACK TO JAPAN,
AND CAME HERE DIRECTLY
I HEAR HE FELL OFF A CLIFF THERE...
AND DIED.
I WAS NOTIFIED FIVE DAYS AGO,
AND WENT TO THE LOCATION OF THE INCIDENT TO CONFIRM IT
OPENS
shine
THIS IS JII-CHAN.
JII-SAN?!
JII-

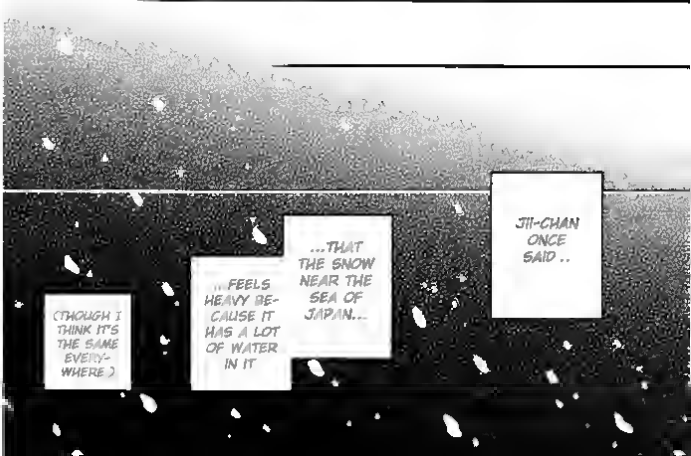
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE...
...
IT'S NOT...
...A LIE.

I'M NOT LYING TO YOU TWO.
IT'S ALL REAL
BE-CAUSE THAT..
LYING TO US?
.. IS ONLY A WOOD CHIP..
HE TOLD THAT TO PEOPLE AROUND HIM.
JII-CHAN SAID TO BRING THIS TO NITOUKOUDOU BRANCH STORE IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM
THIS IS...?
JII-SAN'S WORK WAS TO PUR-CHASE FRA-GRANT WOOD..
.. FROM COUNTRIES ALL OVER SOUTHEAST ASIA
JII-SAN HAD A SHARP EYE
HE WAS ALWAYS ABLE TO PICK OUT HIGH QUALITY FRAGRANT WOOD
EMIRU-CHAN,
DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR JII-SAN'S WORK WAS?

AS EXPECTED FROM JII-SAN
THIS IS ALSO A TOP-QUALITY PIECE...
IS THAT SO...
EMIRU-CHAN,
IS THAT ALL THERE WAS REGARDING JII-SAN'S LAST WORDS?
OTHER THAN THIS JII-SAN DIDN'T LEAVE BEHIND ANY THING ELSE?
DO YOU REMEMBER HAVING HEARD ABOUT "ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE"?

JII-CHAN DIDN'T TALK ABOUT HIS WORK MUCH.
IF IT'S WOOD CHIPS, THAT'S ALL THERE IS
I HOPE THAT'S THE RIGHT WOOD CHIP.
THAT...
EH?
NO.
EMIRU-CHAN.!
EH? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
THEN...
I'M GOING BACK
WAIT-
PLEASE WAIT!

COLLAPSE
EMIRU-CHAN?!
..
SO LOUD.
SO BOLD!


JII-CHAN ONCE SAID..
...THAT THE SNOW NEAR THE SEA OF JAPAN...
...FEELS HEAVY BE-CAUSE IT HAS A LOT OF WATER IN IT
(THOUGH I THINK IT'S THE SAME EVERY-WHERE.)

IT WAS JII-CHAN WHO BROUGHT ME UP.
MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS YOUNG.
IN...
..THAT VILLAGE IN THE VALLEY...
TAKE-CHAN'S HAT...
TAKESHI, COME OVER HERE.

HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU NOT TO PLAY WITH THAT KID?
SHE LOOKS MORE AND MORE LIKE HER EACH YEAR.
THAT SEDUC-TIVE FACE..
EXACTLY THE SAME LOOK...
SO..
JII-CHAN,
I DON'T WANT TO GO OUTSIDE ANYMORE.
. NO ONE PLAYS WITH YOU...

THE FALLEN SNOW THAT BUILDS UP...
...STAY HOME WITH JII-CHAN FOREVER...
EMIRU WANTS TO...
JII-CHAN, IT'S REALLY HEAVY.
THIS FEELING IS LIKE BEING CRUSHED BY THE SNOW
...IS REALLY HEAVY.
HEAVY..
A cat?
Snore
Snore

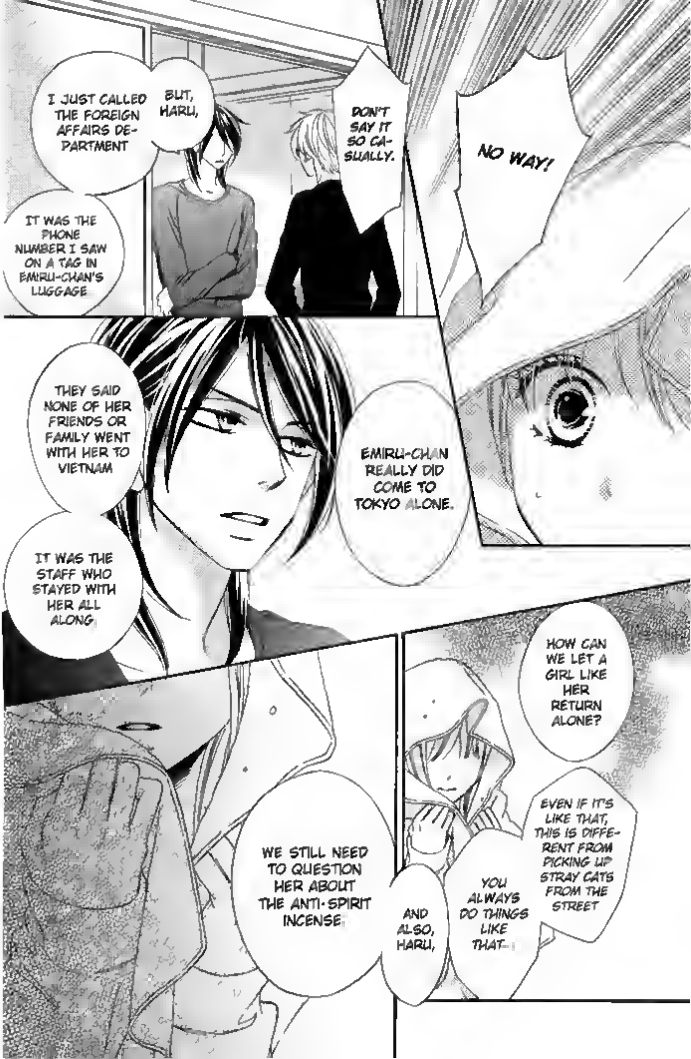
AH, CRAP
I FELL ASLEEP TOO
Meow
WHA...
RISES
がばっ

leans
YOUR FEVER'S GONE
YOU COLLAPSED SO SUDDENLY, IT REALLY GAVE ME A SHOCK.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
THIS ISN'T THE SCENT OF THE FRAGRANT WOOD...
...AH...
NO...
UM...
AH
WHY DOES IT SMELL SO NICE?
I CAN'T CONTROL..

DO YOU WANT TO EAT?
DINNER
EH?
IT'S ALREADY NIGHT-TIME
DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS PROHIBITED?!
IT WASN'T
YOU'RE REALLY TIRED, RIGHT?
YOU WERE SOUND ASLEEP
I-
I'VE DISTURBED YOU TWO.
HMM
IT CERTAINLY STINKS.
EMIRU-CHAN,
WHY ARE YOU WEARING THOSE CLOTHES?
AH, THIS IS..
It's a Vietnamese ao dai, right?
I FELL DOWN AND GOT COVERED IN MUD
BUT I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES,
SO THE LOCAL PEOPLE GAVE ME THE CLOTHES THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYMORE

T/N The Vietnamese ao dai is similar to the Chinese cheongsam

Ah, it's a nice scent
SO THE STRONG SMELL IS PROBABLY ME...
IT WAS REALLY HOT OVER IN VIETNAM, SO I SWEATED A LOT,
BUT I HAVEN'T TAKEN A SHOWER THIS WHOLE TIME,
I WAS TOO TIRED..
YOU HAVEN'T SHOWERED?
FOR FIVE DAYS?
GO TAKE A SHOWER BEFORE YOU EAT!


NO WAY!
DON'T SAY IT SO CASUALLY.
BUT, HARU,
I JUST CALLED THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
IT WAS THE PHONE NUMBER I SAW ON A TAG IN EMIRU-CHAN'S LUGGAGE
EMIRU-CHAN REALLY DID COME TO TOKYO ALONE.
THEY SAID NONE OF HER FRIENDS OR FAMILY WENT WITH HER TO VIETNAM
IT WAS THE STAFF WHO STAYED WITH HER ALL ALONG
HOW CAN WE LET A GIRL LIKE HER RETURN ALONE?
EVEN IF IT'S LIKE THAT, THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM PICKING UP STRAY CATS FROM THE STREET
YOU ALWAYS DO THINGS LIKE THAT...
AND ALSO, HARU,
WE STILL NEED TO QUESTION HER ABOUT THE ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE.

AH.
EMIRU-CHA...
A...
A BEAUTY!

I DIDN'T REALIZE BEFORE BECAUSE OF THE DIRT.
HEY.
EMIRU-CHAN'S SUPER CUTE!
UM, MY CLOTHES...
THEY'RE BEING WASHED RIGHT NOW
IT'S ALREADY LATE, SO STAY HERE FOR TONIGHT.
NO,
NOT ONLY TONIGHT..
LIVE IN THIS HOUSE FROM NOW ON.
WITH US

EH?
AKI!
I HEARD FROM JII-SAN.
YOU HAVE NO PA-RENTS OR RELATIVES, RIGHT?
AND WE HAVE A FREE ROOM ANYWAY
WHAT DO YOU THINK? LET'S DO THAT.
NO, I CAN'T DO SOMETHING SO BOTHER-SOME TO YOU...
WE'RE NOT BO-THERED BY IT.
I'LL GO BACK TO-MORROW
NO,
BUT...
YOU CAN'T
YOU CAN'T...

I WON'T LET YOU GO BACK.
I WON'T LET YOU BE ALONE.

rustling
rustling
AKI!
DON'T ARBITRARILY.
(This part of the image has been processed)
GYAAAAA!
THAT'S SLY, AKI!
I DID IT LAST TIME! THIS TIME IT'S YOUR TURN!
IMPOSSIBLE! I CAN'T DO IT!
HURRY UP OR IT'LL GET AWAY!
SQUEEZE

SMACK
CRACK
SQUEEZE
squashing
squashing
squashing
WELCOME!
THINK OF IT AS YOUR OWN HOME...!
hooray
I GOT USED TO THEM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.
YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF BUGS?
CO-..
*he started to say coward, but changed it to bugs in the next line

I COULD TELL HER MYSELF...
HE'S HARUOMI
JUST CALL HIM HARU.
AH,
I'M CHIAKI
YOU CAN CALL ME AKI
OKAY, IT'S DECIDED!
CLAP
CLAP
OKAY, IT'S SETTLED.
UM...
AH!
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF US FROM NOW ON, EMIRI-CHAN!
EH?
WE'LL NEED SOME TIME TO GET IT EVALUATED. PLEASE WAIT FOR A WHILE...
THE FRAGRANT WOOD THAT YOU BROUGHT ALONG...
AH, EMIRI-CHAN,

EH! YOU'RE NOT SELLING IT TO US?
NO, BUT I DIDN'T PLAN TO ASK YOU FOR MONEY.
BY THE WAY, THAT CAN BE SOLD?
LIM...
YES?
YOU SAID YOU'D BUY THE WOOD,
BUT I DIDN'T PLAN TO...
PLEASE SELL IT TO OUR HEAD OFFICE.
HEAD OFFICE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN CAN BE SOLD? IT'S HIGH-QUALITY FRAGRANT WOOD.
We'll pay the equivalent price.
For the star
Is
ITS POPULARITY IS RANKED NUMBER TWO IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET
AH.
IT'S THE ONE WE USE AT HOME.
YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
THIS INCENSE STICK
THE COMPANY WHO MADE THIS.

NITOUKOU-DOU COM-PANY LIMI-TED...
...IS OUR PARENTS' COMPANY.
SOMEHOW, EMIRU WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF BY THIS STORE TEM-PORARILY.
JII-CHAN.
GENERAL STORE

THIS REALLY IS A UNIQUE STORE
THERE'S NO SIGN-BOARD,
AND IT ONLY HAS INCENSE STICKS FOR ALTARS.
IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THEY'RE RUNNING A BUSINESS
AH,
INCENSE STICKS?
THERE ARE LOTS OF VA-RIETIES, BUT WE DON'T SELL THEM.
WE DON'T CARE ABOUT A SMALL AMOUNT OF PROFIT LIKE THAT.
AH, WAIT A MOMENT
GREAT, I'LL BUY A THOUSAND ♡SHARES OF THIS.
typing
typing
typing

AS LONG AS THEY'RE NOT INVOLVED IN ANY DIRTY BUSINESS, IT'S FINE
yawn
HARU
I'M HUNGRY.
AH, EMIRU-CHAN
YOU'VE BOUGHT YOUR CLOTHES?
AH, YES THANK YOU FOR THE MONEY
HERE'S THE CHANGE.
BAD STYLE!
EH! IS IT BAD?
I ALSO BOUGHT SOME BRIGHTER ONES

THIS ISN'T A COMEDY SHOW, NOR IS IT OSAKA!
WAIT A MINUTE. I GAVE YOU FIFTY THOUSAND YEN, RIGHT?
HOW CAN THERE BE FORTY-SIX THOUSAND YEN CHANGE?
You spent four thousand yen in total?
YOU BOUGHT THOSE AT THE GRANNY'S SHOP ON THE SHOPPING STREET, RIGHT?!
BOTH SHOPKEEPERS LOOK LIKE PEOPLE WHO APPEAR ON TV.
Should we discuss this with someone...?
ALTHOUGH THERE ARE BIG HOUSES IN THE CITY TOO,
HARU, WHERE'S THE FOOD?
AH, I'LL START PREPARING IT NOW
EH~
...ARE LIVING IN THIS RUN-DOWN OLD HOUSE
THEY SAY THEY WANT TO RELAX, SO THAT'S WHY THE TWO OF THEM--.
DON'T "EH" ME, OR ELSE MAKE IT YOURSELF
UM— I'VE ALREADY PREPARED SOME FOOD
EH? REALLY?

THEY'RE ALL DARK-COLORED!
grilled mackerel
stuffed eggplant
stir-fried burdock
miso soup
THOUGH THEY AREN'T ALIKE, IT SEEMS THEY'RE BROTHERS.
AKI, WHO IS EASY-GOING AND ALWAYS SMILING.
(LIKES TO LEAN OVER SUDDENLY)
HARU, WHO IS RELIABLE, A LITTLE BAD-TEMPERED, AND LOVES MONEY.
WHO DO YOU THINK IS THE OLDER ONE?

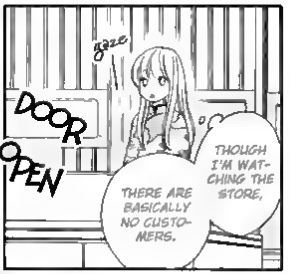
IT'S REALLY OBVIOUS.
HARU-SAN?
KIND OF...
WE'RE ONLY ONE MONTH APART.
IT'S ME...!
I'm taller, right?
WHAT'S THIS...
THE SITUA-TION SEEMS COMPLI-CATED.
AH,
THE GRILLED MACKEREL IS REALLY DELICIOUS

NO,
I...
...CAN ONLY DO THIS MUCH.
HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE WHO'S COOKED?
JII-CHAN AND I... COOKED IN TURNS
THIS STUFFED EGGPLANT TOO.
HARU'S COOKING IS DELICIOUS, BUT, HOW SHOULD I SAY IT... IT FEELS ARTIFICIAL
LIKE IT ONLY HAS THE LOOK?
meow
AH, YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY
BUT STILL, IT'S DELICIOUS!
ACTING LIKE A KNOW-IT-ALL WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN BEAT AN EGG...
I can!
It's just that I'll ruin the yolk.
IT REALLY IS DELICIOUS
THANK YOU

AND YET, I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT THEY SEEM ESPECIALLY DELICIOUS TODAY.
THESE ARE JUST EVERYDAY DISHES.
PROBABLY BECAUSE THERE HASN'T BEEN A CONVERSATION HELD AT THE TABLE FOR A LONG TIME

swallow

IS THERE ANY ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE?
W-
WELCOME
AH!


gaze
DOOR
OPEN
THOUGH I'M WATCHING THE STORE,
THERE ARE BASICALLY NO CUSTOMERS.

EH?
ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE.
ONCE IT'S LIGHTED, THE DECEASED ONE WILL APPEAR IN THE SMOKE
I HEARD THAT YOU SELL THEM HERE,
AND I THOUGHT I'D FINALLY FOUND THEM.
IS THERE ANYONE AROUND WHO KNOWS?
TH-
THEY JUST WENT OUT.
"ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE"?
WHAT'S THAT...?
Is it a product?
YOU DON'T KNOW? IT'S A FRAGRANT WOOD.
PLEASE
I-
I'LL HAVE A LOOK.

ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE...
THIS IS IT, RIGHT?
AH.
I'M SURE I'VE HEARD THAT SOMEWHERE BEFORE.
AH.
"DO YOU REMEMBER HAVING HEARD ABOUT ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE?"
"WE STILL NEED TO QUESTION HER ABOUT THE ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE."
...IS THIS...?

I'M SORRY, SIR.
THE ANTI-SPIRIT INCENSE IS SOLD OUT
HOW CAN THAT...
THE ARRIVAL TIME OF THE NEXT BATCH IS STILL UNCERTAIN
I'M REALLY SORRY
Close

"ONCE LIGHTED, THE DECEASED ONE WILL APPEAR IN THE SMOKE."
AKI-SAN,
JUST NOW
EMIRU-CHAN,
LET'S TALK.
TO BE CONTINUED

Last Note - Chapter 2

by Sakurakouji Kanoko

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